THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) to (d) The Ministry of Railways is keen to promote rail based tourism in the country through Public - Private Partnership. Expression of Interest has been called for in the newspapers from the interested organizations in this regard. Presently, there is no proposal for running such a train in Orissa.

Streamlining of PDS

*434. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY:
SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the foodgrains meant for distribution through PDS to people living below poverty line were being illegaly diverted to the black market;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons therefor;

(d) whether Government had appointed a two member Committee to suggest measures for streamlining the public distribution system in the country; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) The streamlining of the Public Distribution System to improve its efficiency, accountability and effectiveness is an on going process. The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State Governments wherein the Central Government is responsible for procurement of foodgrains (Rice & Wheat), storage and their transportation upto the Principal Distribution Centers of FCI and delivery at prevailing Central Issue Prices, and the State Governments are responsible for identification of beneficiaries, issue them ration cards and distribute foodgrains through a vast net work of 4.86 lakh Fair Price Shops scattered all over the country. The Central and the State Government work in close coordination in this behalf. In such a vast network of the PDS, the possibility of irregularities in some cases/places can not be ruled out.

Recently Programme Evaluation Organization of Planning Commission (PEO) and ORG Marg, New Delhi have conducted studies on Performance Evaluation of Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and Evaluation study of TPDS and AAY respectively.

The Programme Evaluation Organization (PEO) of the Planning Commission has in a report based on study of 18 major States submitted in March, 2005 reported that the Foodgrains leakage (as a percentage of offtake of BPL quota) through ghost card is 16.67% and at Fair Price Shop is 19.71% (all India basis).

The PEO has pointed out that the main reasons for leakages are that implementation of TPDS is plagued by targeting errors, prevalence of ghost cards, unidentified households and siphoning off of foodgrains from the supply chain.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY OF ORG MARG ON DIVERSION OF FOODGRAINS UNDER TPDS.

An evaluation Study on TPDS and AAY was undertaken by the ORG Centre For Social Research, New Delhi. The final report has been received in September, 2005 and forwarded to States/UTs for further necessary action. As per the findings of the Study there was a diversion of wheat and rice of 53.3% and 39% respectively at the all India level.

(d) and (e) The Hon'ble Supreme Court on 12.7.2006 has passed an interim order to constitute a Central Vigilance Committee to be headed by Mr. Justice D.P. Wadhwa, a retired judge of the Court and to be assisted by Dr. M.C. Saxena, the Commissioner earlier appointed by the Supreme Court. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in its order further stated that "the Committee shall look into the maladies which are affecting the proper functioning of the system and also suggest remedial measures. For this purpose, the Committee shall, amongst other things, focus on:

(a) The mode of appointment of the dealers.

(b) The ideal commission or the rates payable to the dealers.

(c) Modalities as to how the Committee already in place, can function better, and

(d) Modes as to how there can be transparency in allotment of the food stock to be sold at the shops.

While dealing with the question of the mode of appointment, the Committee shall also suggest as to a transparent mode in the selection of the dealers. The Committee shall also indicate as to how more effective action can be taken on the report of the Vigilance Committees already appointed. It goes without saying that the same shall be in addition to the legal remedies available to any citizen in setting law into motion... The Committee would invite suggestions from general public, organizations and would consider the suggestions, if any received, in the proper perspective.

We request the Committee to give its report within a period of four months so that further instruction/directions can be given... This direction is initially given for the Government of Delhi to be followed on all India basis."

Electrification of rail lines in Tamil Nadu

*435. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received proposals from the Government of Tamil Nadu for electrification of rail lines in the State;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the current status of those proposals; and

(c) the electrification projects, currently under implementation and consideration State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, proposal for electrification of the following section have been received from various public functionaries of Tamil Nadu and its status is as under:—

S. No.	Section	Status
1	Villupuram-Pondicherry	Electric traction has been introduced in August, 2006.
2	Villupuram-Trichchirapalli	The electrification work has been included in Rail Budget 2006-07.